

775 suffers sickness or misfortune if an ancestral spirit dies a second death. A person who has bad health says, "The spirit of my grandfather has been caught by *Esuvi*." The name of the good spirit *Osande* is used by a person who is suffering. Such a one says, "I have no more *Osande*." These instances clearly reveal a belief in the dependence of human welfare on the interest of benevolent ancestral spirits.

775 After a lapse of three months I asked Ngonga again about
791 *Osande* and *Ondele*. He confirmed what he had previously said, but
753 spoke in the plural of these spirits; good spirits are called *Olosande*,
bad spirits are called *Olondele*. The medicine-man will visit a hut
to foretell the future, and while there he puts a concoction in an image
to which he addresses questions. He plugs his nostrils, then in a
falsetto voice feigns answers from the image. The father of a family,
or possibly the mother's brother, may kill an animal in front of the
hut on this occasion. He then says to *Olosande*, "We hope when
[761] we kill this there will be no more sickness." The Ovimbundu are
afraid of death, and they therefore sacrifice to *Olosande*, asking that
there shall be no death in the family.

775 I do not know whether the Ovimbundu distinguish multiple
souls as some Negro tribes do. The part of a man which does not
die is sometimes called *utima*, which is the word for heart. Dr.
M. W. Ennis says that the *utima* and the *omuenyo* are both names
of the spirit existing in a living body. Ngonga seems certain that
every person irrespective of age, rank, and sex has a spirit, but I
could find no evidence that the Ovimbundu visualize a separation
of ranks or sexes after death. When a man kills himself he is buried
762 near a river so that his spirit will go to the sea, and for the same
775 reason a murdered man is buried near a river. At Ngalangi I inquired
from other Ovimbundu people concerning suicide. Women who
commit suicide generally do so by hanging or drowning. Men stab
themselves in the heart or use a flintlock gun, the trigger of which
they pull with their toes. It is feared that the spirit of a suicide will
return to induce another suicide in the family, therefore there is
anxiety to rid the community of these spirits.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND CONDUCT

771 The Ovimbundu have many high standards of conduct, some of
688 which have been mentioned in dealing with the education of children.
There is, however, no idea of sin. That is to say, there are no com-
mands laid down by some authority which is more than human.

RELIGION

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Nevertheless, the idea of crime is well developed, and there are many actions which are punishable because they contravene the laws of the tribe. Adultery is a crime on a par with theft; but adultery is not a sin. Suku, the supreme being, issues no commands. Ancestral spirits are concerned only with sacrifice and homage to themselves. There is no theory of punishment or reward in a future life according to conduct on earth. 771
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Perhaps *ekandu* is the only word which could express sin. An Ocimbundu would say that murder is the chief *ekandu*. "*Ekandu* is to make anything have a bad time." To send a stranger along the wrong path is *ekandu*. It would be *ekandu* to throw an animal on the fire. It is *ekandu* if a man is guilty of fornication with his wife's sister. Such an act is said to be *ekandu* only if the wife's sister is visiting the house of the culprit. The male defaulter is regarded as blameless, but the people of the village from which the wife's sister came would be expected to pay the wronged wife. Sexual offences against young children are very serious. In fact the death penalty or banishment would be inflicted, and such offences are given by the Ovimbundu as examples of *ekandu*. 681
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This subject of moral responsibility leads naturally into the question of laws and penalties. There are among the Ovimbundu well-defined moral codes and clearly formulated tribal laws which have been described in chapter VI. 671

FUNERAL RITES

COMMONERS

In the village of Cilema in the district of Elende I witnessed the funeral rites of a boy aged twelve years. When a few hundred yards from the village, I heard sounds of drumming coming from a secluded place in the tall grass. On reaching the clearing four drummers were seen, each of whom held a tubular drum between his legs; these drums were of different lengths. The man on the left of the drumming squad played with an up and down movement of his left hand only, to provide the bass tone. Other drummers played with the palms and fingers of both hands. Thirty feet from the drummers stood a group of women who always started the rhythm for the drums by clapping their hands, and the hand-clapping continued as an accompaniment for the drums. 764

Near-by, men were seated on the ground, while a large number of women walked about or sat on the ground chatting and smoking their pipes. The general impression was not one of solemnity.